

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES.

MARCH 29, 1880.—Ordered to be printed.

Mr. FARLEY, from the Committee on Post-Offices and Post-Roads, submitted the following

REPORT:

[To accompany bill S. 1419.]

The Committee on Post-Offices and Post-Roads, to whom was referred the bill (S. 1419), having considered the same, make the following report accompanied by a bill as substitute for said Senate bill 1419.

The original bill, as referred to the committee, as well as the substitute, therefor, both tend to the same end; both aim at the same results; and the committee have reported the substitute as the less complex method of laying before the Senate the result of their investigations.

The bill aims to prevent frauds in the reuse of postage-stamps.

That there are frauds, and that the present methods of prevention do not answer, is not only a well-known fact, but is attested by the Postmaster-General, who is certainly most qualified to know, in a communication to the committee, which is here inserted:

POST-OFFICE DEPARTMENT,  
*Washington, D. C., March 19, 1880.*

SIR: I have the honor to acknowledge receipt of a letter, dated the 18th instant, addressed to me by the clerk of your committee, submitting a copy of bill (S. 1419) "authorizing the Postmaster-General to adopt a uniform canceling-ink and stamping-pad," and asking, in your behalf, an expression of my views as to "its merit or expediency."

Without undertaking to say how much loss the department sustains by the cleansing and reuse of postage-stamps, there can be but little doubt that it does sustain some, and that there is constant danger of its becoming greater. In fact, from the facility with which most of the canceling-inks now used can be removed from the face of postage-stamps, the department, so far as the reuse of such stamps is concerned, is very much at the mercy of every petty swindler who may turn his attention that way. I think, therefore, that there is a necessity for the application of some remedy for the evil, which remedy can probably be best secured through the instrumentality of such a bill as is now before me.

Congress has heretofore endeavored to furnish a corrective for the evil adverted to by a clause in the sundry civil appropriation act approved June 20, 1878 (see 20 Stat., p. 240); but the authority thereby granted the department was unaccompanied by an appropriation of money, and was coupled with a restriction that rendered it practically inoperative.

The department at present furnishes postmasters with letter-balances, twine, stamping instruments, and other supplies for official use; there is no reason why it should not furnish them with suitable canceling-ink, inasmuch as upon its proper use depends to a large extent the safety of the postal revenues.

In view of the foregoing considerations, I am of the opinion that the bill referred to me, and which is now returned, should become a law.

Very respectfully, &c.,

D. M. KEY,  
*Postmaster-General.*

Hon. S. B. MAXEY,  
*Chairman Committee on Post-Offices and Post-Roads, United States Senate.*

The committee have thought it best to leave to the Postmaster-General the selection of the means and method of cancellation, limiting the amount of expenditure to a reasonable sum, and guarding the government against the unreasonable claims of patentees.

If the Postmaster-General can secure an effectual means of cancellation at an annual expenditure not to exceed the sum named in the bill, it will assuredly be of great benefit to the government; if he cannot, the government is left in no worse condition than now.

Wherefore, the committee recommend that Senate bill No. 1419 be indefinitely postponed, and that the substitute reported therefor do pass.

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The Committee on Finance, to which the bill was referred, report that the bill is in conflict with the provisions of the Act of March 3, 1879, relating to the State of Missouri, and that the bill is in conflict with the provisions of the Act of March 3, 1879, relating to the State of Missouri. The committee have therefore recommended that the bill be indefinitely postponed, and that the substitute reported therefor do pass.